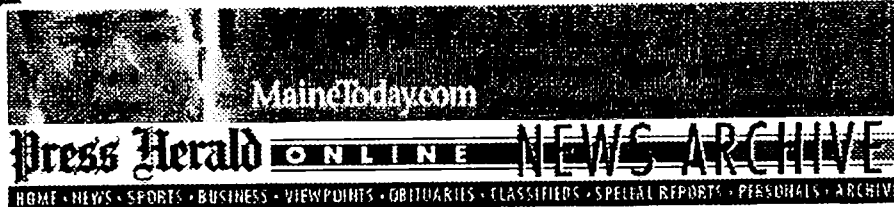


MaineToday.com

Portland Press Herald
KENNEBEC JOURNAL
Herald Sentinel
NEWS 8 WMTW



NEWS

Local and state
National and
world

WEATHER

4-day forecast

SPORTS

High schools
Pirates

BUSINESS

News
Stock quotes

ENTERTAINMENT

Movies
Dining
On stage
Art

CALENDAR

Today's events
Coming up

TV LISTINGS

Search your
area

BOOKS

Maine authors
Reviews

TRAVEL

Getting around
What to do
Regional guides

OUTDOORS

Outdoor guides
Seasonal
activities
Field reports

20 BELOW

Teen writing
and art
Chat and
opinion

COMMUNITIES

Group sites
Statewide
calendar

CAREERS

Job hunting

CHEVERUS ABUSE SUIT PENDING

Published on March 21, 2000 Page: 1B

© 2000- Blethen Maine Newspapers, Inc.

Byline: DAVID HENCH Staff Writer

A lawsuit filed almost two years ago alleging that a former **Cheverus** High School priest molested a student in the mid-1980s has yet to be scheduled for trial.

Lawyers for Michael S. Doherty, a Florida man who attended **Cheverus**, said their client has been waiting since March 1999 to find out if his civil case in Cumberland County Superior Court can move forward against the Rev. James Talbot; **Cheverus** High; Maine's Roman Catholic Diocese; and the Society of Jesus of New England, which oversees the school. At issue are accusations by Doherty that Talbot sexually assaulted him numerous times between 1984 and 1985, often on school property and during school hours, when Doherty was a **Cheverus** student.

The case, which was filed in 1998, has lingered since last March, when lawyers for the institutions named in the suit asked Justice Thomas E. Delahanty to dismiss the action against them.

"It's been under advisement for about a year," said Daniel Lilley, Doherty's lawyer. "I don't know the

Employer
profiles
Help wanted
HOMES
Moving to
Maine
Real estate
listings
Agent directory
WHEELS
Automotive
news
Dealer
Showroom
Classifieds
MILESTONES
Weddings
SHOPPING
Stores
Coupons
**YELLOW
PAGES**
Business
listings
ADVERTISING
Web
advertising
Classified sales
Internet
consulting
About Us

circumstances. "I like to be optimistic and it's just
simply a glitch somewhere."

Delahanty said that the rules of ethics governing
judges' conduct preclude him from discussing the
case. "I can't comment on anything I have under
advisement," he said. "I get to them as quick as I
can."

The Talbot case bears some similarity to another
case at **Cheverus** High that was brought into the
open in recent weeks. In that case, former
Cheverus teacher and coach Charles Malia has
been accused of sexually **abusing** students in the
1960s and 1970s. Both cases involve former
students who have stepped forward as adults to
raise charges of incidents that allegedly happened
years ago.

But there is a clear legal distinction between the
Talbot and Malia cases: While the statute of
limitations has expired for civil damages in the
Malia case, Doherty's case falls within the time
frame.

The statute of limitations on a civil suit for child sex
abuse is 12 years, but the time limit does not start
until the person turns 18. Doherty is now 32. He
turned 18 in 1986 and filed his lawsuit just days
before his 30th birthday when the 12-year limit
would have expired. The statute of limitations for a
criminal complaint was six years, though it was
eliminated in 1999.

But the institutions Talbot was associated with
argue that the alleged perpetrator, not them, should
be held liable.

They say that they should not be vulnerable to a
lawsuit because the statute of limitations applies
only to "actions based upon sexual intercourse...or a
sexual act." The claims against the institutions are
for negligence and infliction of emotional distress,

But Doherty's lawyers argue that the law is meant to cover a broad range of claims arising out of sexual **abuse** of minors.

The suit alleges that school officials, the Jesuits and the Diocese knew or should have known about Talbot's alleged behavior.

Doherty accuses Talbot of molesting him while Talbot served as a parish priest at St. Jude's Church in Freeport and Sacred Heart Church in Yarmouth, and while an English teacher and soccer coach at **Cheverus**. According to the lawsuit, Talbot used alcohol and intimidation to **abuse** Doherty, and also befriended Doherty's parents for the purpose of gaining access to the student.

Doherty did tell one other teacher about the **abuse** but asked the teacher not to tell anyone, the Rev. John Keegan, president of **Cheverus**, said when the suit was filed in 1998.

Keegan said the teacher involved was young and did not know that he was required to report the allegation to authorities. The teacher, Frank Hale, now works outside the United States and could not be reached for comment.

The suit says the **abuse** stopped in 1985 after Doherty told Hale, though Doherty's lawyers could not say why.

Efforts to locate Talbot were unsuccessful and officials at the Jesuits' regional headquarters did not return telephone calls. Talbot's lawyer, John N. Kelly, refused to discuss the case. Doherty also declined.

Melissa A. Hewey, the lawyer representing the school and the Jesuit order, said she is confident the school did not know about any inappropriate sexual behavior by Talbot.

When Doherty first filed suit, the school moved quickly to suspend Talbot. The priest was sent to a treatment facility in Maryland. The school also notified **Cheverus** parents about the allegations.

The accusations prompted the school to set up a mechanism enabling students to report **abuse** or other problems to outside counselors unaffiliated with the school.

The student handbook distributed at orientation lists the telephone numbers for an independent psychologist at the Spurwink School and former Portland Deputy Police Chief John Brennan, now a Catholic deacon for churches in Cape Elizabeth and Windham.

No criminal charges were filed against Talbot, and police did not investigate the case when the accusations were made in 1998. At the time, the statute of limitations for criminal charges was six years, and had long since expired.

At the time the suit was filed, few people were aware that **Cheverus** officials were also dealing with another set of sexual **abuse** allegations involving a **Cheverus** teacher.

In 1997, a former student enrolling his son at **Cheverus** insisted the boy not take classes with Malia, a respected teacher and successful coach whose career spanned 30 years. The former student claimed that Malia had abused him while he was at **Cheverus** 25 years earlier.

Several men have since come forward to say that Malia had sexual contact with them while they were students there in the 1960s and 1970s. Contacted by the Portland Press Herald earlier this month, Malia admitted to having sexual contact with students and said the behavior stopped "a long time ago."

School officials have expressed sympathy and remorse.

Lilley said those statements are one reason he would like to see Doherty's lawsuit proceed.

"What concerns us is, reading all the things we hear from **Cheverus** in the Malia case, that seems to fly in the face of all the actions taken in the Doherty case," Lilley said.

"You can't interpose a defense like that in court and be giving lip service in the press that you want to help people," he said.

Hewey, **Cheverus'** lawyer, said there is no inconsistency between the school's public and legal positions.

"I think there's a difference between being sympathetic and wanting to help and defending against a civil suit," Hewey said. "One is the school's reaction to a member of their family and another is a lawyer's reaction to a lawsuit."

In the case of Malia, the first person making the accusation refused to make a formal complaint. Instead of suspending Malia upon learning of the allegation, the school gave him a psychological evaluation, which showed he was no threat to children, the school has said. Malia also agreed to take early retirement at the end of the school year.

Although it notified the Department of Human Services about the complaint against Malia in October 1997, the school did not alert the district attorney's office until Talbot's suit was filed in July 1998. Another person came forward in 1999 with allegations of **abuse** by Malia, and the district attorney's office then launched an investigation.

Now Portland police are taking a closer look at the Talbot civil case as part of the Malia investigation.

"We're planning on speaking to a number of people including Father Talbot to see if he has any information with respect to Malia and his behavior," said Lt. Joseph Loughlin, head of investigations for the Portland Police Department.

Police interviews with recent graduates have not led to any evidence that Malia assaulted students since September 1993, the earliest date for which a criminal case could be brought.

Staff Writer David Hench can be contacted at 791-6327 or at:

dhench@pressherald.com

Caption: PHOTO: b&w

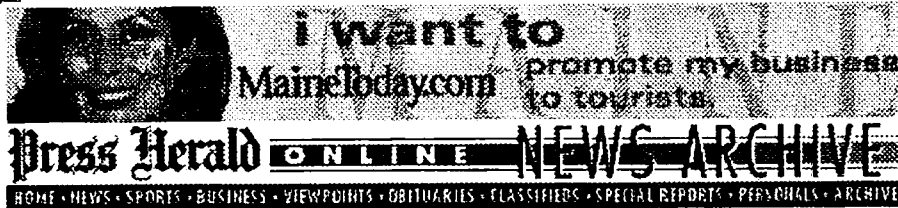
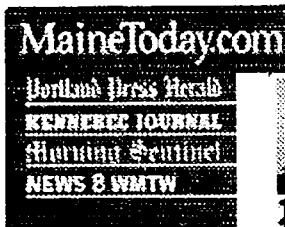
File photo The Rev. James Talbot, a priest who once taught and coached at **Cheverus** High School, is accused in a civil suit alleging sex **abuse**.

Search again:

(((<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
-----	----------------------	---------------------------------------



Copyright © Blethen Maine Newspapers Inc.



NEWS

Local and state
National and
world

WEATHER

4-day forecast

SPORTS

High schools
Pirates

BUSINESS

News
Stock quotes

ENTERTAINMENT

Movies
Dining
On stage
Art

CALENDAR

Today's events
Coming up

TV LISTINGS

Search your
area

BOOKS

Maine authors
Reviews

TRAVEL

Getting around
What to do
Regional guides

OUTDOORS

Outdoor guides
Seasonal
activities
Field reports

20 BELOW

Teen writing
and art
Chat and
opinion

COMMUNITIES

Group sites
Statewide
calendar

CAREERS

Job hunting

DIOCESE, CHEVERUS STILL PART OF LAWSUIT

Published on March 30, 2000 Page: 1B

© 2000- Blethen Maine Newspapers, Inc.

Byline: PETER POCHNA Staff Writer

A judge has determined that **Cheverus** High School and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland must remain as defendants in a lawsuit brought by a man who claims he was sexually abused years ago by a former **Cheverus** teacher.

Michael Doherty sued the school, the diocese and the Rev. James Talbot for sexual abuse that he claims he suffered at the hands of Talbot while attending **Cheverus** in 1984 and 1985. The school and the diocese argued that they are not liable, because the statute of limitations expired on their alleged offenses, which include negligent recruitment, hiring and supervision. The diocese also claimed it is not liable because it does not govern **Cheverus** or its faculty.

But Superior Court Justice Thomas Delahanty, after holding the matter under advisement for a year, issued a written order Friday rejecting the arguments of the school and the diocese.

Delahanty ruled that the lawsuit will continue against all the defendants if Doherty submits an amended complaint that contains more detailed

Employer
profiles
Help wanted
HOMES
Moving to
Maine
Real estate
listings
Agent directory
WHEELS
Automotive
news
Dealer
Showroom
Classifieds
MILESTONES
Weddings
SHOPPING
Stores
Coupons
**YELLOW
PAGES**
Business
listings
ADVERTISING
Web
advertising
Classified sales
Internet
consulting
About Us

descriptions of the alleged abuse.

"I'm very pleased with the decision," said Dan Lilley, Doherty's attorney. "We will submit the revised complaint, probably next week."

Depositions then will be filed and a trial is likely to follow.

Melissa Hewey, an attorney for **Cheverus**, said the ruling has nothing to do with the merits of Doherty's allegations.

"It's not a big loss," Hewey said. "We just wanted to get the statute of limitations matter resolved before proceeding."

Doherty, now 32 and living in Florida, was 16 and attending **Cheverus** when Talbot allegedly started molesting him in 1984. Talbot was a teacher and coach at the school, and continued in those positions until Doherty filed the lawsuit in 1998.

The school immediately suspended Talbot, and he was sent to a Jesuit treatment facility in Maryland.

The statute of limitations on a civil suit for child sex **abuse** is 12 years, and the time limit kicks in once the alleged victim turns 18. Doherty beat the time limit by filing the lawsuit a few days before his 30th birthday.

Cheverus and the diocese argued that the statute of limitations for their alleged crimes is shorter than for molesting children, and that it expired before the lawsuit was filed.

Lilley successfully countered that the lengthy time limit for child molestation cases doesn't apply only to the person accused of committing the **abuse** but also to a broad range of claims arising from the **abuse**.

Staff Writer Peter Pochna can be contacted at 791-

6329 or at:

ppochna@pressherald.com

Search again:

Search



Copyright © Blethen Maine Newspapers Inc.

MaineToday.com

Portland Press Herald
KENNEBEC JOURNAL
Hennepin Sentinel
NEWS 8 WMTW



Press Herald ONLINE NEWS ARCHIVE
HOME • NEWS • SPORTS • BUSINESS • VIEWPOINTS • OBITUARIES • CLASSIFIEDS • SPECIAL REPORTS • PERSONALS • ARCHIVE

NEWS

Local and state
National and
world

WEATHER

4-day forecast

SPORTS

High schools
Pirates

BUSINESS

News
Stock quotes

ENTERTAINMENT

Movies
Dining
On stage
Art

CALENDAR

Today's events
Coming up

TV LISTINGS

Search your
area

BOOKS

Maine authors
Reviews

TRAVEL

Getting around
What to do
Regional guides

OUTDOORS

Outdoor guides
Seasonal
activities
Field reports

20 BELOW

Teen writing
and art
Chat and
opinion

COMMUNITIES

Group sites
Statewide
calendar

CAREERS

Job hunting

BETRAYED, THIS FAMILY FIGHTS BACK

Published on March 8, 2002 Page: 1A

© 2002- Blethen Maine Newspapers, Inc.

Byline: Bill Nemitz

She hasn't been to Mass for months, but Virginia Doherty still prays.

"I talked to God last night," she said Wednesday afternoon. "I said, 'You finally have time . . . you finally have time to get these guys.' "

It's not the kind of invocation you'd find in a Roman Catholic prayer book. Coming from a 61-year-old Irish mother who's had it up to here with the church she once embraced, it sounds more like an earthly demand than a spiritual request.

You see, Virginia, while still a believer, is angry. So is her daughter, Courtney, who sat next to her in the living room of a quiet home on the Carrabassett River. The family normally rents out the house as an income property, but lately has been using it as a retreat from the storm that stretches from the Diocese of Portland to the Archdiocese of Boston to Rome itself.

"There's a ripple effect to what these men have done," Courtney said, referring to the now-infamous priests who for decades have found perverse

Employer
profiles
Help wanted

HOMES

Moving to
Maine
Real estate
listings
Agent directory

WHEELS

Automotive
news
Dealer
Showroom
Classifieds

MILESTONES

Weddings

SHOPPING

Stores
Coupons

YELLOW PAGES

Business
listings

ADVERTISING

Web
advertising
Classified sales
Internet
consulting

About Us

her own brother. "These men have affected the lives of children who haven't even been born yet," Courtney said.

But this story is not just about those men. It's about two women - and a family they helped hold together after the unthinkable happened to one of their own.

Frank and Ginny Doherty and their brood could not be more Catholic. While Frank went to **Cheverus** High School in Portland in the 1950s, Ginny grew up walking to and from Mass - every day - through the often harsh elements of Prince Edward Island. By the time they married, moved to Freeport and began raising a family, high school meant **Cheverus** for the three boys and Catherine McAuley for Courtney, the baby girl.

And so it was. Sean and Ryan excelled at **Cheverus** - leaving deep footprints for young Michael. Both athletes, they befriended their soccer coach, the Rev. James Talbot, who quickly got to know the whole family and, as luck would have it, began saying Mass regularly at their parish - St. Jude's in Freeport.

"The boys went everywhere with him," Ginny said. "Our whole lives revolved around those schools - and our children."

And, as time went on, around Father Talbot. To ease his weekly transitions between **Cheverus** and St. Jude's, the Dohertys even gave Talbot a room in their house to change and keep a few spare sets of clothing. He was, as Ginny and Courtney put it in unison, "a member of our family."

Still, Ginny, while raised to respect the men in white collars, is nobody's fool. She'd heard the whispers about this one or that one - and she was never shy about leveling with her children.

"I'd tell them if any of them ever touches you, tell

somebody - tell us," she said. "If something like that happens, it's not your fault."

Good advice to bestow, perhaps. Harder - for some much harder - to follow.

Sean graduated from **Cheverus** in 1984. Ryan followed in 1986. That left Michael at **Cheverus** and Courtney at McAuley - so close in age that they were both members of the Class of 1987.

"I remember he got strange," said Courtney, who knew her brother perhaps better than anyone. "His personality changed. His friends changed. He started seeming more and more distant, more and more angry."

Courtney chalked it up to hormones. And when she and Michael headed for college in Nova Scotia and Florida, respectively, she figured he'd grow out of it.

But he didn't.

Throughout the early 1990s, Michael began dropping bombshells on those he trusted most - Courtney, his brothers, his girlfriend (now his wife) Amy.

"He'd mention Father Talbot and say, 'Well, you know he molested me . . . but I'm all right. That's all that happened and I'm all right,' " Courtney said. "In retrospect, they were clearly cries for help."

Of course, Michael swore them all to secrecy. And of course, this being an Irish family, they all ignored him. Before long, everyone but Frank and Ginny knew, and while their first concern was for Michael, Courtney smoldered over the man who had so brazenly violated her family's friendship and trust.

"When I got married in 1995, I sent out the invitations," she said. "And on the inside of his I wrote, 'There's no need for you to reply because

you can not be innocent and you know that. I know what you are. I know what you did. And when you least expect it, so will everybody else.' "

Did Talbot respond?

"No," she said. "I never spoke to him again."

Nor did Courtney forget.

One day in April 1998, she picked up the newspaper and read how Bishop Joseph Gerry had presided over a Service of Healing and Reconciliation for victims of sexual **abuse** by clergy - an offshoot of a settlement between the Diocese of Portland and victims of another priest, the Rev. Raymond Lauzon. Something inside her snapped.

She fired off a letter to the diocese suggesting that if it really wanted to help the victims heal, it might begin by having the perpetrators step forward and personally apologize. Still, she stopped short of naming Talbot, instead saying her brother was "a victim of a personal family friend and prominent teacher at **Cheverus** High School."

A day or two later, the diocese called and asked Courtney to come to the chancery. At that meeting, to no one's apparent surprise, Courtney identified the perpetrator as Talbot.

Late that May, her telephone rang one day at work. It was a priest from the Jesuit provincial office in Boston calling to tell her that Talbot was gone.

"I said, 'Gone? What do you mean, gone?' "
Courtney said. "And he said 'He's been removed from **Cheverus**. He's with me right now.' "

Courtney and her husband, Tim, already had planned a family gathering at their home in Freeport for that weekend. Michael and Amy arrived first. Courtney took a deep breath and told Michael she'd turned Talbot in to the church and they had removed

him from **Cheverus** and he wasn't going to hurt anyone anymore and she hoped he didn't hate her but she had to do it. . . .

"Michael just stood there," Courtney said. "Then he just said, 'Wow.' "

Nobody knew what to say next. Finally Amy, who had witnessed her husband's anguish in ways nobody else could, stepped forward.

"She threw her arms around my neck," Courtney said. "And she said, 'Thank you very much.' "

Then Frank pulled into the driveway, alone. Ginny was off visiting Sean in Pittsburgh.

"Michael looked at us and just said, 'I'm going with Dad. I'll be back,' " Courtney said. "They were gone about an hour . . . and I was a basket case."

Ginny, now the last to know, came back to Maine. Frank and Michael took her up to the Eastern Promenade in Portland, where Michael turned to her and said, "Mom, there's something I have to talk to you about."

"We walked off by ourselves . . . and he told me," Ginny said. She paused, for once at a loss for words.

"What do you say?" she finally said. "You're dumbfounded."

It was only the beginning. With Talbot no longer saying Mass at St. Jude's, people began asking questions. And with the Dohertys so closely linked to him in the parish consciousness, they naturally asked the Dohertys.

"Frank finally told people, 'The reason he's been taken away is because of this family,' " Ginny said. "We were the reason."

Life changed dramatically. The family everyone loved became the family best avoided. Friends stopped calling. Ginny gave up her hairdressing job - how can you do someone's hair if they don't want to chat? - and went to work helping Frank and the boys at the family store in North Freeport.

"Shunned?" Ginny replied when asked if the word fit their predicament. "It was like we'd committed some kind of mortal sin. When people saw us on the street, they wouldn't even speak."

There were negotiations . . . and lawyers . . . and promises of counseling for Michael. And, as the reality of what had happened sank in and news of other allegations by other victims of other priests dribbled out, there was the inevitable friction among family members who felt the emotional eruptions, yet couldn't turn off the pain that fueled them.

Last June, Michael finally settled with the diocese in exchange for counseling, an undisclosed amount of money and a letter of apology to be read at Sunday Mass at St. Jude's. The family was in Kingfield at the time, but Frank, unknown to everyone else, got into the car before dawn and drove two hours to Freeport for the service. When he heard the priest ask the congregation to pray for Talbot, he finally rose.

"If you're going to pray for him," he bellowed, "you'd better also pray for my wife and the rest of my family."

Ginny shook her head with disgust.

"The church went silent," she said. "And he left the church and not a soul stopped him to ask how we were. Nothing."

Things are different now. A crack in the church's front line of defense that began with the Rev. John Geoghan in Boston has fissured to encompass

dozens of priests and an ever-increasing many of dioceses. Just this week, the Dohertys found themselves quoted in a Boston Globe story about Talbot and other Jesuits at Boston College High School - it seems, as they long suspected, that Michael was not his only victim.

And with all the publicity has come at least some vindication. Since the Globe story ran, the Dohertys have received almost constant calls from all over the country - all supportive. Wednesday morning, a man who lives across the street here came by just to see how Ginny was holding up.

"That was nice," she said, her eyes finally smiling.

They know things will never be the same. They still worry for Michael, although Courtney has heard a welcome strength in his voice as he marvels at how suddenly the tide has turned. They may never forgive Talbot - especially Ginny.

"I need to stand in front of that man and confront him," she said. "He better not be within arm's length, that's all."

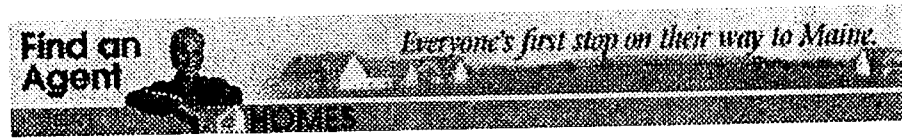
That, in all likelihood, will never happen. Nor will Talbot or the church that harbored him for so long likely admit any time soon that there's a readily available antidote for these scandals that some men created and other men concealed. It's been there all along.

"Two Irish women," Courtney said.

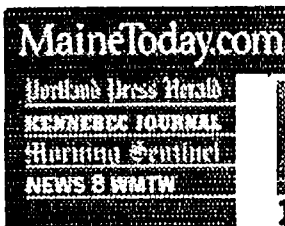
Columnist Bill Nemitz can be contacted at 791-6323 or at:

bnemitz@pressherald.com

Search again:



Copyright © Blethen Maine Newspapers Inc.



NEWS

Local and state
National and
world

WEATHER

4-day forecast

SPORTS

High schools
Pirates

BUSINESS

News
Stock quotes

ENTERTAINMENT

Movies
Dining
On stage
Art

CALENDAR

Today's events
Coming up

TV LISTINGS

Search your
area

BOOKS

Maine authors
Reviews

TRAVEL

Getting around
What to do
Regional guides

OUTDOORS

Outdoor guides
Seasonal
activities

Field reports

20 BELOW

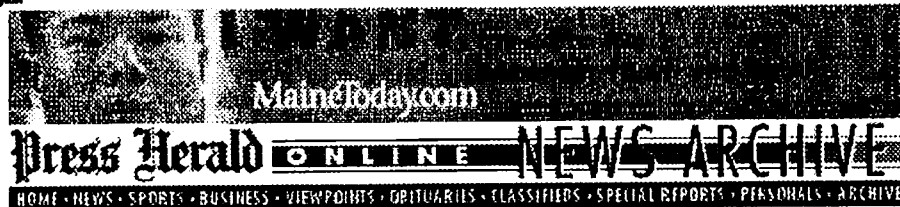
Teen writing
and art
Chat and
opinion

COMMUNITIES

Group sites
Statewide
calendar

CAREERS

Job hunting



Another Cheverus ex-staffer accused

Published on March 7, 2002 Page: 1A

© 2002- Blethen Maine Newspapers, Inc.

Byline: JOHN RICHARDSON and TESS
NACELEWICZ, Staff Writers

Cheverus High School in Portland is once again facing a controversy involving charges of sexual **abuse** against former faculty members.

Although the alleged incidents did not occur at Maine's only Jesuit high school, **Cheverus** has now been drawn into a priest **abuse** scandal in Boston.

At issue is the conduct of two priests formerly on the **Cheverus** staff - one a teacher and soccer coach, and the other a former principal. Both were accused this week of molesting students at Boston College High School, a Jesuit school in Boston, more than 20 years ago.

The two men facing accusations are the Rev. James Talbot, who was fired in 1998 from **Cheverus**, and the Rev. Stephen Dawber, who left **Cheverus** in 1984.

The Rev. John Keegan, who is president of **Cheverus** High School, said Wednesday that the school was unaware of the incidents in Boston when the two were hired. "It was absolutely not known,"

Employer
profiles
Help wanted
HOMES
Moving to
Maine
Real estate
listings
Agent directory
WHEELS
Automotive
news
Dealer
Showroom
Classifieds
MILESTONES
Weddings
SHOPPING
Stores
Coupons
**YELLOW
PAGES**
Business
listings
ADVERTISING
Web
advertising
Classified sales
Internet
consulting
About Us

I would have heard. But there were no hints at all."

The developments have raised fears of unreported victims in Portland, as well as new questions about what Jesuit and school officials in Boston knew of the priests' misconduct.

The allegations occur two years after another former faculty member at **Cheverus**, Charles Malia, admitted to sexually **abusing** students. Several men accused him of molesting them in the 1960s and '70s. The school has maintained that it was unaware of the **abuse** by Malia, who is not a priest, until victims stepped forward in 1997.

In the Boston cases, Talbot stands accused of molesting at least eight people in Massachusetts before he was transferred to **Cheverus**, the Boston Globe reported. Police are investigating whether charges should be filed.

Talbot transferred from Boston College High School to **Cheverus** in 1980, in part to start a soccer program. He remained at **Cheverus** until 1998, when he was accused of sexually **abusing** a student in 1984. He was removed from the school and active ministry. A civil case was later settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.

He no longer lives in Maine, and has not returned phone calls for comment.

Dawber came from Boston College High School to **Cheverus** in 1978 and was the school's principal from 1979 until 1984. He recommended that Talbot follow him to **Cheverus**.

Dawber was never accused of misconduct at **Cheverus**, according to the school. He later returned to Boston College High School. On Tuesday, however, officials there temporarily suspended Dawber from his teaching position

allegation of sexual misconduct against Dawber dating from 20 or more years ago.

Dawber could not be reached for comment Wednesday but a Boston College High School spokesman, Michael Reardon, said that it is "standard practice" for the school to suspend any faculty member accused of **abuse** while an investigation is conducted. He said the school has no record of any allegations ever being made to the school against Dawber or Talbot before now.

The developments draw **Cheverus** into an evolving national scandal that started in Boston with the trial of a pedophile Roman Catholic priest who victimized children as he was transferred from one parish to another.

The problem has shaken Catholics around the country, forcing the removal of priests and costing the church an estimated \$1 billion or more in legal settlements.

In Maine, the Portland diocese has responded by publicly identifying two active Aroostook County priests who have admitted sexually **abusing** teenagers in the 1970s. Bishop Joseph Gerry has said the priests are not a threat to children but has asked their parishes to help him decide whether they should remain in their churches.

Gerry is now expected to announce his decision on their futures as soon as Sunday. The diocese also is expected to turn over to the Cumberland County district attorney the names of other inactive priests accused of **abuse**.

Alumni reacted to the news Wednesday. Thomas Kane, a **Cheverus** graduate and former Portland city councilor, said he is reserving judgment. "I've always had great love for the school," Kane said. "They did well by me and I had a great education there."

However, he added: "I'm holding judgment back and hopefully they've done the right things all along and weren't part of a coverup."

Kane said the most difficult thing to accept would be "if (Jesuit officials) knew down in Massachusetts that either of these guys had a problem and kind of slipped them in without **Cheverus** knowing who they were."

Michael Sweatt of Portland, a 1976 **Cheverus** graduate, is among a group of former students who have raised concerns about the handling of the Malia case. The former students - who are now in their 30s and 40s - have alleged that Malia sexually abused them.

Sweatt is critical of the school because he says it responded too slowly and reluctantly to victims in the Malia case when they finally stepped forward.

Keegan said that since the Malia case came to light the school has held workshops for parents and students about sexual assault.

Terry O'Brion of Portland, a **Cheverus** parent, said the events seem remote to her family's life.

O'Brion's daughter, Katie, was the first girl to graduate from **Cheverus** last spring after the all-male school became co-educational, and her son, Rory, is a junior there now.

"My children were not at **Cheverus**" when the two priests were there, O'Brion said. "I don't have any connection at all."

Rory, 17, said students have not been talking much about the news report. "It hasn't affected us too much yet," he said.

Keegan said he's heard of no sexual **abuse**

allegations against Cheverus High School for those reported in the late 1990s regarding Talbot and Malia. He said it is "my hope and prayer" that there were no other victims here.

He also said the school has a clear zero-tolerance policy about sexual **abuse**.

"**Cheverus** High School," Keegan said, "is a safe place for young people."

Staff Writer John Richardson can be contacted at 791-6324 or at:

jrichardson@pressherald.com

Staff Writer Tess Nacelewicz can be contacted at 791-6367 or at:

tnacelewicz@pressherald.com

The Rev. Stephen Dawber

Staff photo by Fred J. Field

Two priests formerly on the staff of **Cheverus** High School were accused this week of molesting students in Boston more than 20 years ago.

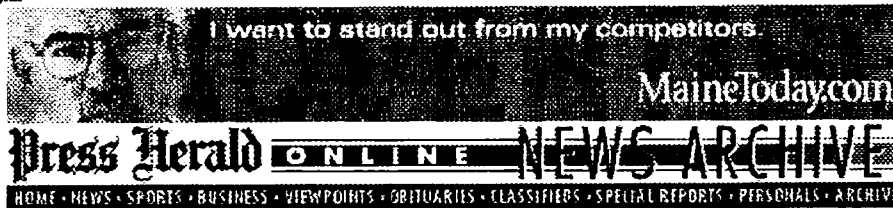
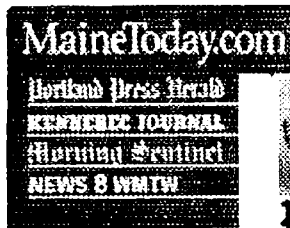
Nugget Box: with sidebar chronology

Search again:

Search



Copyright © Blethen Maine Newspapers Inc.



NEWS

Local and state
National and
world

WEATHER

4-day forecast

SPORTS

High schools
Pirates

BUSINESS

News
Stock quotes

ENTERTAINMENT

Movies
Dining
On stage
Art

CALENDAR

Today's events
Coming up

TV LISTINGS

Search your
area

BOOKS

Maine authors
Reviews

TRAVEL

Getting around
What to do
Regional guides

OUTDOORS

Outdoor guides
Seasonal
activities
Field reports

20 BELOW

Teen writing
and art
Chat and
opinion

COMMUNITIES

Group sites
Statewide
calendar

CAREERS

Job hunting

DAS TO DISCUSS ABUSE EVIDENCE IN PRIESTS' FILES

Published on March 8, 2002 Page: 1A

© 2002- Blethen Maine Newspapers, Inc.

Byline: GREGORY D. KESICH Staff Writer

Maine's top prosecutors will meet in Augusta today to discuss how to handle allegations about sex abuse by Roman Catholic priests.

Cumberland County District Attorney Stephanie Anderson says the state's eight district attorneys and Attorney General Steven Rowe will try to work out a consistent policy on what to do with evidence in cases that could be prosecuted, and in cases that happened long ago.

The Diocese of Portland told Anderson last month that church officials would cull their personnel files to find all allegations of abuse lodged against priests. The documents are supposed to be delivered to Anderson on March 19. She would hand off the information to other prosecutors if potential crimes happened in their jurisdictions.

Maine's Catholic leaders decided to open the files amid a national scandal involving priests who sexually abused boys or girls, and the church's practice of settling complaints of abuse and reassigning the priests.

Employer
profiles
Help wanted
HOMES
Moving to
Maine
Real estate
listings
Agent directory
WHEELS
Automotive
news
Dealer
Showroom
Classifieds
MILESTONES
Weddings
SHOPPING
Stores
Coupons
**YELLOW
PAGES**
Business
listings
ADVERTISING
Web
advertising
Classified sales
Internet
consulting
About Us

priest, John Geoghan. The Boston Archdiocese is expected to pay a \$20 million to \$30 million settlement to 86 adults who say they were abused by Geoghan. That case and others have compelled church officials nationwide to confront the problem and release information to prosecutors.

In Maine, the Portland Diocese initially responded with a new policy of identifying, but not necessarily removing, any active priests with a history of **abuse**. On Feb. 10, it named two active priests - the Rev. John Audibert and the Rev. Michael Doucette - who admitted to sexually **abusing** children in the 1970s. Bishop Joseph Gerry is now considering whether the two priests will be allowed to continue in the ministry.

This week, **Cheverus** High School was drawn into the controversy when two former officials - one a former principal and the other a teacher and coach - were accused of sexually **abusing** students at Boston College High School in the 1970s before they came to Portland.

The former principal, the Rev. Stephen Dawber, was never accused of **abuse** at **Cheverus**, the school's principal said. The teacher, the Rev. James Talbot, was removed from active ministry after being accused in 1998 of **abusing** a 15-year-old **Cheverus** student in the mid-1980s.

The church's release of old personnel files could mean the controversy will lead to criminal actions, although it's not clear if any inactive Maine priests could face prosecution.

Anderson said that if a case falls within the statute of limitations, she will either prosecute it herself, or give the information to the local prosecutor in the district where the crime is alleged to have occurred. Under Maine's statute of limitations, only sexual **abuse** that occurred since 1984 can be prosecuted in

In cases that are too old to prosecute, Anderson said she may identify the priests publicly if she believes they pose a threat to children.

Diocese spokeswoman Sue Bernard said the diocese will try to contact the people who made the allegations and ask if they object to having their names passed to authorities. If a victim cannot be found - or if someone does not want his or her identity known - the information will be relayed to Anderson without the name. Anderson said the diocese will be required to disclose identities of alleged victims if she needs them in the investigation of a possible crime.

Anderson said she is satisfied with the process, and wants victims to know that she will not publicly disclose any victims' names or prosecute a case in which the victim does not want to participate.

"I think this will be an ongoing process that will last for several months," she said. "It's an evolving situation."

It's unknown how many Maine priests have been the subject of allegations. In the Boston Archdiocese, Cardinal Bernard Law has given prosecutors the names of about 80 priests suspected of molesting children, although prosecutors are awaiting the names of victims.

For the past 2 1/2 weeks, the Portland Diocese co-chancellor, Sister Rita-Mae Bissonette, has been going through personnel files dating back 75 years to find any allegations of child sex abuse. The process is slow because many of the documents are handwritten and difficult to read, Bernard said.

Two victims in Maine have recently come forward with allegations against non-active priests, Bernard said. One of the priests was already the subject of an allegation and the other was not, she said.

Bernard said Bissonette interviews the alleged victims in the files and then forwards the information to Anderson.

Cynthia Derossiers, the Maine coordinator of the Survivor's Network of People Abused by Priests, said she has heard from a steady stream of victims, but does not advise them to tell their stories to the church.

"Who is Sister Rita to judge these people?" Derossiers said. "I tell them to get a support system in place, and find their own therapist. I am not sending people to the church."

Derossiers said she has heard from 13 people in the past two weeks. Anderson said she has been contacted by eight to 10 alleged victims.

This week, Anderson said she wants all allegations going back 75 years in cases in which the victim may still be alive. She plans to prepare a report that quantifies how many allegations were made against priests, how many priests were involved and what happened to the cases.

As long as those numbers remain secret, she said, they can be minimized or exaggerated in people's minds.

"Part of what I'd like to do here is dispel myth," she said.

Staff Writer Gregory D. Kesich can be contacted at 791-6336 or at:

gkesich@pressherald.com
Anderson

Nugget Box: CHRONOLOGY

Here is a chronology of events involving the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland for the past month:

Feb. 10: The diocese announces that it will begin disclosing the names of priests actively serving in Maine who have been accused of sexually **abusing** minors. The Rev. Michael Doucette of St. Agatha and the Rev. John Audibert of Madawaska are the first priests named under the new policy, and both men inform their parishes of their histories of sexual misconduct.

Feb. 19: The Catholic Church says it will turn over to Cumberland County District Attorney Stephanie Anderson the personnel files of inactive priests accused of sexual misconduct with children. Anderson says she will bring criminal charges if she finds sufficient evidence.

Feb. 22: Anderson says she will release a written report detailing allegations of **abuse** against former Roman Catholic priests in Maine.

March 1: The diocese says it will tell authorities about any new allegations of sexual **abuse** by priests, no matter how long ago the events may have happened.

March 4: High-ranking Maine church officials meet to consider the future of the Aroostook County priests who admitted to sexually **abusing** teen-age boys in the 1970s.

Monsignor Marc Caron, co-chancellor of the diocese, attends Mass over the weekend at three St. John Valley parishes where Doucette serves as pastor. He speaks with the parish councils, and relays their concerns to Portland Bishop Joseph Gerry. Gerry has already heard from the Madawaska parishioners of Audibert. Gerry says his decision about whether Doucette and Audibert will be allowed to continue as active priests would be announced to the parish members first.

March 5: The Rev. James Talbot, who taught and coached soccer at **Cheverus** High School in the

1980s and '90s, is accused of sexually **abusing** several high school students at Boston College High School in the 1970s, before his transfer to Portland. Talbot was removed from the priesthood in 1998 after being accused of sexually **abusing** a **Cheverus** student in the mid-1980s.

March 6: **Cheverus** is drawn further into the Boston scandal as the Rev. Stephen Dawber, **Cheverus** principal from 1979 to 1984, is accused of sexual **abuse** at Boston College High School in the 1970s. A **Cheverus** school official says he was never accused of sexual **abuse** here.

March 6: Andrew Levesque of Caribou says that beginning in 1985, Doucette pursued him sexually for two years while Doucette was a priest at Sacred Heart parish in North Caribou. Levesque says he resisted the advances but did not report Doucette because he feared the priest could hurt his career as an aspiring priest.

Compiled by staff researcher Beth Murphy

Search again:



Copyright © Blethen Maine Newspapers Inc.